THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Long-term coal linkages for Power Stations are provided and also rationalised as and when required by the Standing Linkage Committee (Long-term), depending on factors like long-term projected availability of coal, transportation logistics, time frame of supplies etc.

According to available information non-development of linked mines has not forced shifting of original linkage to alternate sources.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Export of Farm goods

*195. SHRI S.S. SURJEWALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Union Commerce Minister, while addressing a meeting of Consultative Committee, assured the MPs that export of farm goods are allowed only after careful consideration of domestic requirements;

(b) if so, whether the same yardstick is applied to the domestic requirement of manufacturing industries and other industrial units; and

(c) if not, the reasons for discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It is he policy of the Government to allow export of any item of mass consumption only after careful consideration of domestic requirements. The requirements of domestic industry are taken into account while formulating the Export Import Policy.

Import of Animal rennet

†196. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that although import of animal rennet is banned, yet cheese made from animal rennet is freely being imported;

(b) if so, what is the policy of Government in this regard;

(c) the steps being taken to stop the import of cheese made from animal rennet; and

(d) the amount of animal rennet and its products seized at various ports and airports and land customs stations in the country during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Import of animal rennet is prohibited under the current Export & Import Policy. Likewise, import of cheese which is a consumer product is also restricted.

(d) Ministry of Commerce does not maintain such data.

Losses suffered by FCI

*197. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Hindustan Times', dated the 24th and 25th July, 1995 under the captions "Food policy: Persisting with a folly" and "No takers for rice despite low price", respectively;

(b) if so, what are the points brought out in these news-items; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto including on the subsidy meant to be passed on to consumers through the public distribution system being used to meet the losses incurred by the FCI, giving the details of the losses suffered by the FCI?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The newspaper article of 25th July, 1995 is critical of the hike in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) allowed in the recent years and advocates a free market system of foodgrains trade. It also suggests that Government should maintain only RPDS and a buffer stock